

a management unit that registers said product ID information thus read and manages a product shipping process based upon said product ID information thus registered.

Claim 17, line 3, replace "is made to correspond" with --corresponds--.

Claim 18, line 3, replace "is made to correspond" with --corresponds--.

Claim 19 line 3, delete "is"; and

line 4, replace "made to correspond" with --corresponds--.

Claim 20, line 3, delete "is"; and

line 4, replace "made to correspond" with --corresponds--.

**IN THE ABSTRACT:**

Page 34, line 3, delete "According to the present invention" and replace "individual" with --Individual--.

**REMARKS**

The Office Action of September 20, 1999 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered.

In this Amendment, the specification and abstract have been amended to overcome the objection thereto raised by the Examiner, and to correct informalities noted upon the review of the application. Additionally, the claims have been amended to place same in better form without changing the intended scope of the claims.

In view of the above amendments, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's objection to the Abstract has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Merlin et al. reference is respectfully requested. In urging